

**Making RILEM more attractive**  
**Internal Workshop - Madrid, 22-23 March 2006**  
**Chair: Arnon Bentur**

## **WORKSHOP SUMMARY**

### **Introduction and Background**

In recent years RILEM has undergone changes which enhanced the role of the technical experts in the decision making process. This change reflected the understanding that the strength of the organization and its resilience in this dynamic period is directly related to its attractiveness to serve as a friendly platform for establishing the technical state of the art and impacting the profession by networking of international experts who will make RILEM their prime organization of choice. We have already seen consequences of these changes, such as much more focused activities of the technical committees which is accompanied by a healthy renewal process (about 20% of the technical committees complete their work within a given year and a similar number of new committees are being formed), strengthening of the annual week and making its content more technical, and within that scope, having several committees meet within its framework, and more.

There is a need now to continue and develop additional modes of operation by which we could improve our platform to the benefit of its members, to make our professional impact more effective and to provide more value to our current members and make ourselves more attractive to new members.

### **Objective**

The objective of the internal workshop was to provide a setting for brainstorming to identify and develop new modes of interaction with our members and improve the current ones. The workshop participants were RILEM officers, delegates, TC chairs and members of TC. The outcome of the workshop will serve as guidance for the RILEM secretariat as well as the standing committees. The outsourcing of the publication of M&S to Springer, which is currently on its way after successfully completing an agreement by the SG, is consistent with this workshop; the reduced administrative burden of the publishing operation will hopefully allow more resources to be placed for direct contact with members to provide new services and modes of activities.

### **Workshop Scope and Mode of Operation**

A list of issues has been identified which were addressed in the workshop. Each of them was discussed in a dedicated task group, and they were later synthesized together in a plenary meeting. The task groups and conveners:

1. Value to members – O. Jensen
2. Proceedings and books – J. Marchand
3. Recruitment of new members – P. Richner

4. Support of TC work – G. De Schutter
5. Conferences and RILEM events – C. Andrade
6. Regional activities and policies – C. Leung and R. Gettu
7. Relations with Titular/Industrial Members – Å. Skarendahl
8. RILEM website – J. Vyncke
9. Meetings – J. Kropp

An implementation plan of the workshop recommendations has been set in cooperation with the MAC “Management Advisory Committee” chaired by Johan Vyncke: the proposals of the different task groups were forwarded to the MAC, and the MAC will subsequently be in charge of developing them further for concrete actions and priorities, and those will be presented for approval during the Annual RILEM meeting in September 2006 in Quebec. It is expected therefore that actual actions based on the recommendations of the task groups will be initiated rapidly, namely before the end of this year.

The conclusions of each of the task groups, the discussion in the plenary session and the recommendations of action items taken by the MAC following the workshop are summarized below.

### **Task group 1: Value to members**

Ole Mejlhede Jensen (convenor)

M.Alexander, A.Goncalves, S.Mindess, J.Monjo Carrio, L.Binda

#### **Summary and Recommendations**

- RILEM secretariat servicing the members:
  - Information, guidance and networking regarding financial support: EC frame programmes and many other sources
  - Help with conference and TC workshop organization (package for the organizer?, time line etc.)
- Improving the RILEM web:
  - Establish an open “members catalogue” with hyperlinks rather than the passive, closed list (check for example CIB web). There could be hyperlinks from the TC membership list to the members catalogue and links from the members catalogue to the TCs, to the private homepages to members “private” projects etc. Portrait photographs could be available at the members catalogue as well.
  - Project database as well?.
  - Database of open positions within “Materials and Structures”
  - Online dictionary of terms within “Materials and Structures” (RILEM produced one in 1952-1955) – see an example at <http://www.steelconstruct.com/> (ECCS, The European Convention for Constructional Steelwork)

- RILEM questions/answers homepage for guidance and assistance (Questions: by e.g. PhD students, Answers: e.g. by RILEM TCs or individuals) – perhaps better to Educational Activities Committee?
- Keeping the TC work (documents, final report) available for a longer period of time
- Junior Chapter – in particular directed towards the university environment
- Stronger encouragement of young researchers to become members of TCs
- Encourage TCs to run doctoral courses or improve connections with doctoral courses
- Establishment of a “speakers bureau” – persons being willing to give a talk on a specific issue (to improve dissemination to and collection of information from universities)
- Consider a direct contact to the universities (distribute RILEM newsletters, list of publications, final reports etc - check how ACI is involved with universities)
- Make access easier for RILEM members: All TC work (STAR, meeting agendas etc) should be accessible for any RILEM member – or potentially also non-RILEM members
- Focus more on guidelines in TC work for the sake of practitioners

## **Task group 2: Proceedings and books**

Jacques Marchand (convenor)

V. Baroghel-Bouny, R. Gettu, K. Kovler, C. Leung, M. Partl, A. Porro, M. Ribas-Silva, K. Scrivener, J. van Mier

### **Summary and Recommendations**

- There is value in reports, proceedings and recommendations
- Value varies with the type of publication;
- The review process of the state-of-the-art reports and the recommendations is appropriate.
- The selection of the type of review process of the proceedings should be left to the organizers.
- RILEM should encourage the publication of the state-of-the-art reports and repackage the publication of recommendations.
- Exposure and distribution is key!
- Free electronic version available to everyone through RILEM website. Seek alliances and explore possibilities with publication societies.
- Paper copies are still ok. Quality control is important.

## **Task group 3: Recruitment of new members**

Peter Richner (convenor)

J. Vyncke; R. Torrent, P. Bartos, R. Astudillo, J. Kropp, G. de Schutter, A. Skarendahl, A. Bentur

### **Summary and Recommendations**

- General strategy for the recruitment of new members has to be formulated
- Strategy for recruitment depends on the region and local circumstances:

- Europe: focus on industrial members
- South Asia: establish a healthy membership to start with
- Prime routes for recruitment:
- Technical Committees (Chairs)
- Conferences and other events (especially in regions we are weak)
- Joining forces with national and international associations
- Support by the General Secretariat regarding the administrative treatment
- Continue the model with discount rates according to GDP of a country and monitor the effect
- Simplify the membership categories: Only two categories of membership are available:
  - Individual Members
    - Students
    - Affiliates
    - Senior Members
  - Corporate Members
    - < 3 individuals active within Rilem
    - < 10 individuals active
    - 10 and more individuals

For corporate members, the exact numbers have to be validated (economic impact).

In conjunction with Rilem conferences a system can be established which allows attendees to become “Guest Members” of Rilem for one year. The procedure is as follows:

- Every Rilem conference has two different fees:
  - Full price for non-members
  - Reduced fee for Rilem members (e.g. – 100 €)
- Non-members can become a “Guest Member” for the following calendar year if they wish so (no additional cost)
- Guest Membership includes:
  - Online access to Materials and Structures and selected other material on our website
  - Continuous information on Rilem events, new TC’s formed, ...
  - Formal invitation to become a regular member for the following year

## **Task group 4: Support of TC work**

Geert De Schutter (convenor)

### Recruitment of TC members

The first task of a TC is to find active members in order to perform the predefined tasks. Normally, the chairman of the TC already contacted some potential members before raising the TC proposal. However, it is important to come to a well-balanced team, with representation from all over the world. How can this be better achieved?

- Clearly visible announcement on web page of creation of new TC, with explicit ‘call for active members’

- Similar announcement in ‘Materials and Structures’
- Direct mailing to potentially interested groups, e.g. selected by internet search
- Clarify some ‘rules’ on composition of TC (e.g. Not restricted to experienced experts, but also open to PhD; not limited to 1 member per country; ...). TCs should not be ‘exclusive clubs’
- No distinction between ‘effective members’ and ‘corresponding members’, only ‘active members’!

#### Publication support

For almost all TCs, one of the final aims is to produce ‘technical reports’ or ‘state-of-the-art reports’. How can RILEM be of any help in the publication of these documents? How can we assure that the documents are easily available, also outside the RILEM community?

- Give ‘information package’ to TC chairs concerning different options to get results published (recommendations, STAR, proceedings, ...)
- Provide ‘guidelines concerning publications’ instead of ‘strict rules’
- Increase visibility of the resulting publications
- Publish ‘as soon as possible’
- Proceedings can be limited to ‘extended abstracts’ or ‘non-reviewed papers’
- Selection of ‘best conference papers’ for ‘peer review’ publishing in ‘Materials and Structures’
- Recommendations should be freely available on website (downloadable)

#### Encourage meetings during annual week

Each year, first week of September, RILEM organises its ‘RILEM Annual Week’. It would be very interesting to make this week also a week of TC-meetings. During last RILEM Annual Weeks, only a few TCs actually had a meeting. How can RILEM encourage TCs to hold a meeting during the RILEM Annual Week?

- ENCOURAGE, without making a rule of it
- The organiser of RILEM Week can send information package to TC chairs (example of J. Marchand)
- Having TC meeting during RILEM week might be problematic for TCs not working on concrete (Parallel conference in most cases only on concrete)
- Cluster meetings: positive idea, but needs more time to evolve
- Logistic problem (meeting rooms)?

#### TC web page

Each TC has a ‘private page’ on the RILEM website, for internal communication. What can we do in order to improve this system?

- Improve user-friendliness of website
- Provide public part of TC page
- Annual report of TC

- Resulting recommendations
- Any information that the TC would like to spread to public
- Provide ‘information package’ to TC chairs about possibilities of using RILEM website for TC work
- “Open up your work, and you will attract more interested people”

### Research projects

TCs do not perform research, but gather the information. Nevertheless, because of existing networks (created by TCs), members might take joint action to apply for research or network funding (e.g. EC-funding 7th Framework...)

What, if any, can be the role of RILEM in supporting this?

- RILEM should be involved in, or at least follow attentively, some evolutions (e.g. ECTP ...)
- Look to possibilities to give relevant information to RILEM members
- Look to possibilities where RILEM can play specific role: training, dissemination (e.g. Marie Curie actions, also in relation with ‘Doctoral Schools’)
- Problem: who would actually take this job within RILEM?
- Suggestion: create ‘Task Group’ to study the possibilities

*RILEM supports TCs; TCs do not have to support RILEM*

### **Task group 5: Conferences and RILEM events**

Carmen Andrade (convener)

O.Jensen, K.Kovler, S.Mindess, M.Partl, J.van Mier, J.Vyncke, V.Baroghel-Bouny, A.Brandt

#### Types:

- Workshops and Conferences linked to Rilem weeks?  
They should be mainly grouped in the Rilem weeks.  
Not too many at the same time or the same year
- To organize a Big Rilem Congress or Conference?  
Organize only in very special occasions  
To make a more detailed study on the possible benefits (World Congress on Materials as an example)  
It should be different from other organizations
- Special publication series related to events? (Now we have the Proceedings in hard copies)  
No. To have only STAR and PROC as at present

#### Periodic events:

- Taking into account that the TC’s have a finite life and the members change, How to deal with thematic periodic events? Distinction should be made on each type?  
Do we need to maintain some interesting ones?  
Be flexible and adapt to subjects and circumstances.

Some thematic subjects which are traditional in Rilem, if there are not active TC's should be followed in the TAC in order to promote active TC's or to look for new activities in order to maintain the knowledge and specialists within Rilem

In the case a traditional thematic subject is not anymore maintained by an active TC, the suggestion is to look for agreements with other organizations active in that subject of interest for Rilem

- Should we announce the closure on some subjects?  
No. They have to remain open for future actions

#### RILEM sponsorship:

- To have a member in the scientific Committee? Which feed-back for Rilem?  
To ask the organizers to give the possibility to Rilem to have the proceedings in Rilem web  
To ask visibility: presence of Rilem representative in the opening sessions, chairmanships, keynote lecturers

#### Coordination related the organization of events under the initiative of an individual that overlap with thematic subjects of an active TC:

More visible the relations of the TC with the Workshops and Conferences organized with the same scope: Related TC's should be contacted and participate

#### RILEM assistance:

- What assistance should RILEM give to RILEM conferences (obviously not financial)?
- Mailing lists? Promotion through RILEM web and journals?
- Web available list of organizational issues?
- Which kind of assistance for publications?
- Case where proceedings are not published by Rilem: which kind of publicity through Rilem?

These subjects have been treated by other task groups and were not addressed.

### **Task group 6: Regional activities and policies**

Chris Leung and Ravindra Gettu (convenors)

M.Alexander, J. Monjo Carrio, F.Moran, M.Ribas Silva, P.Richner, A.Skarendal

#### Regions referred to Developing Regions:

- China
- India
- Latin America
- Africa
- Eastern Europe

#### Proposed actions:

1. Organization of RILEM Conferences in Developing Regions

- At least ONE Conference in each Region over the Next 5 Years
  - Each Conference Focus on a Topic of Particular Interest to the Region
  - MAC should Identify Contact Person in Each Region
2. Collaboration with Regional Organizations
    - Co-sponsoring of Regional Workshop/Courses in addition to Conferences. RILEM can provide Speakers, Local Organization takes care of Logistics
    - Work with Regional Journals to include Abstracts of Materials and Structures in their publications
  3. Discount on International Conference Registration Fee
    - May be Helpful as Regional Researchers often receive Insufficient Subsidy to Attend International Conferences
  4. Information Dissemination through Taped Lectures
    - Keynote Lectures at RILEM Conferences/Workshops can be Taped with Permission of Speakers
    - DVD/Videotapes can be made and sent to Interested Groups in Developing Regions
    - Also Possible to Upload Lectures on RILEM Website
  5. Translation of RILEM Reports/Recommendations
    - Give Free Permission to Translate RILEM Materials into Chinese, Spanish, etc
    - Regional Organization Free to Disseminate the Translated Material
    - A Softcopy given back to RILEM for Posting on Website

## **Task group 7: Relations with Corporate (Titular/Industrial) members**

Åke Skarendahl (convener)

A. Porro, P. Richner, R. Astudillo, P. Bartos, G. De Schutter

The daily work of a corporate member: (Can RILEM support?):

- Development of research and innovation strategies
- Training and continued education of R&D staff
- Knowledge about and access to equipment
- Offer active participation in RILEM network activities
- “Supply” education and training
- Support through secretariat for passive members

Comment: Tendency that organizations carefully choose the associations to participate in. “Join few – be active”



1. RILEM can offer access to tables of discussions:

- Interaction with the international regional and global players (UN, ECTP, ISO, CEN, ....)
- Activities to assist in the preparation of research programs and projects
- Offer active participation in RILEM network activities (TCs, central groups etc)
- For passive members, support through the secretariat is the main value.

2. RILEM can offer in giving broader perspectives to a members own daily activities:

- Adding multidisciplinary perspectives.
- A sector perspective in generation of knowledge and innovation
- Develop cooperation with other appropriate organisations. (LC is not the answer)
- This should be met by RILEM through strategic alliances while maintaining materials and testing as core RILEM activities.

3. RILEM can create meetings with fellow corporate member managers:

- Board of Directors meetings might be the answer?
- The agenda and the format for the meetings are critical.

4. RILEM can give access to information:

- Structured technology watch
- Analyzed information

Comment: Resource demanding  
Commercial activity

5. RILEM can give visibility, promotion:

- Specific products, image profiling, branding (Industry)
- Announcing available resources and excellence (Research units)
- The web
- M&S and the Magazine
- Display during meetings
- Member of RILEM “stamp”

Comment: If you are not visible you do not exist

## **Task group 8: RILEM website**

J. Vyncke (convenor)

Véronique BAROGHEL-BOUNY, Arlindo GONÇALVES, Ole Mejlhede JENSEN, Konstantin KOVLER, Christopher LEUNG, Moema RIBAS SILVA, Roberto TORENT, Marta SANCHEZ DE JUAN, Arnon BENTUR

Challenge:

- Appealing
- Functional

- Professional
- User friendly
- One click access!
- Clear navigation and positioning !

Focus on committee work:

Give a clear overview of activities in the Clusters, highlight ongoing activities in TC's and results/achievements of closed TC's.

- Objectives (Annual Report)
- Private directory
- How to join
- Members
- Results/Achievements
- Resolve password issues

Advertising events:

Provide a searchable up-to-date data base on events: Meetings, Workshops, Conferences, etc.

- Announce upcoming events (including short description)
- Report on past events (including access to proceedings)
- “Make it a RILEM event !”

Access to publications :

Provide direct access to our bookstore and free libraries.

- Materials & Structures (Springer Link)
- STAR / Recommendations
- Proceedings
- Exploit better the available SEARCH engine !

Networking and links :

Show our strength by demonstrating the extent of our network.

- Yellow Pages
- White Pages
- Less is More

Attract young people:

Highlight our interest to engage with young people.

- PhD conference
- Student membership
- TC participation
- Announce job opportunities

Position the association:

Inform about the goals, missions, structure.

- Mission
- Structure
- Join
- Contact us

An effective tool for communication:

Facilitate last minute updating and information sharing (lean mailbox !) Provide one click access to :

- Updated agenda of meetings
- Background documents
- Minutes
- Voting....

**Task group 9: RILEM meetings**

J. Kropp (convenor)

M. Alexander, A. Brandt, R. Gettu, S. Mindess, J. Monjo-Carrio, F. Moran, M. Partl, K. Scrivener, J.G.M. van Mier, L. Binda

Administrative meetings of standing committees :

Once a year, sufficient time must be allocated to the meetings of standing committees for in depth discussion of their respective tasks :

- More interaction/exchange among standing committees is recommended (joint sessions, mutual information)
- Efficient meetings require
  - \* easy access to the meeting place
  - \* good facilities
  - \* full technical support

RILEM Spring meeting:

Major annual effort for administrative tasks: concentrate on support for Standing Committees' meetings

- additional technical activity is optional (by chance)
- fixed place in Europe is preferred

Additional marketing/advertising effort:

- young researchers'/professionals' day
- 3rd. Activity: High level RILEM conference/workshop with TC show cases for regional efforts

RILEM annual week:

Technical/scientific event in combination with GC and management meetings

- shift business meetings (standing committees) to weekend

Technical events:

- \* Organize major International Conference/Workshop
- \* Encourage TC meetings
- \* Strengthen cluster meetings
- \* Present Rilem work in TECHNICAL DAY
- \* Introduce Young Researcher's Day

Layout of annual week :

Weekend	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Tuesday	Friday
Standing Committees Meetings	Int'l Conference		Cluster Meeting	Technical Day	GC
	TC meetings		TAC		Bureau?
			Young Researchers' Day		
	Conf. Dinner		Annual Dinner		

Advertising in regions of special interest:

RILEM Conference/workshop in co-operation with local organization

- Co-op agreements with local organizations
- Fee-membership scheme
- Long range planning through TAC/MAC
- External media support
- TC support through :
  - Thematically related TCs
  - TC show cases
  - Local experts participation

## Plenary discussion and recommendations

The plenary discussion addressed some selected key issues in which there was a need to get a feel of the general consensus:

- Accessibility to RILEM publications (books and proceedings) on the web: the general consensus was that there should be an open access to these publications, and favorably consider such accessibility to non-members. This is consistent with

the RILEM mission and the expectations of the TC members who are working as volunteers. Such openness may increase the RILEM membership and compensate for the loss of income of sales of books, especially in view of the relatively small number sold, of an average of 100 books sold per each publication. A step of this kind may position RILEM as a unique organization.

- Many of the participants expressed the view of opening up the accessibility to the TC web sites. Yet, this needs to be done with caution, and there may be a need for different levels of “openness”, to TC members, RILEM members and the general public. This decision should be however with the TC and its chair.
- There was a consensus that there is a need for much more time for the standing committees to meet, and one mechanism is to turn the spring meeting to largely an “administrative“ one, devoted to standing committee meetings. In view of this option, there is preference to holding such a meeting in an accessible location in Europe.
- There was no enthusiasm for organizing a “high level” RILEM event, although if there is an opportunity for such an event once every 5 to 10 years it should not be ruled out.
- A viable mechanism to position RILEM in developing countries is to team up with local/national societies, which may be more effective than trying to set a local RILEM group. Yet, RILEM should be flexible, as different mechanisms may be required for different regions/countries. Within this discussion, the importance and effectiveness of translating selected RILEM publications was highlighted.

In view of the input of the workshop, the MAC has already identified some key issues which it will develop as action items to be presented and approved in the annual meeting at Quebec:

- New strategy for the electronic versions of the RILEM books (proceedings and reports)
- Three level accessibility to TC websites
- Translation of state of the art reports and RILEM recommendations
- Make the spring meeting purely administrative
- Repeated events: keep RILEM as the leader in repeated events which were pioneered by RILEM (e.g. SCC, nano-technology in construction)
- Provide services (not financial) to organizers of RILEM events, workshops and conferences
- Updating and restyling of the website
- Involve board of directors in liaising with other institutions (e.g. UN, ECTP)